

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1889

INFO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 20050

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, VS, PFOR, VN, FR

SUBJECT: TOUR D'HORIZON CONCERNING VIETNAM

REF: PARIS 18696

SUMMARY: IN A TOUR D'HORIZON CONVERSATION JULY 31, QUAI DESK OFFICER FOR VIETNAM, VILLEMUR, SPOKE OF THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS: FRENCH PROGRAM TO EVACUATE FRENCH NATIONALS FROM SOUTH VIETNAM BY SPECIAL FLIGHTS; THE FRENCH AID PROGRAM FOR SVN AND THE NEED FOR A PRG REQUEST FOR NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE RESUMPTION OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION; THE POSSIBLE END OF THE SVN "TRANSITION PERIOD" IN SEPTEMBER; THE GENERAL ECONOMIC SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM; AND THE SOVIET ROLE IN INDOCHINA. END SUMMARY

1. IN TOUR D'HORIZON CONVERSATION JULY 31 QUAI DESK OFFICER FOR VIETNAM VILLEMUR DISCUSSED A VARIETY OF TOPICS CONCERNING VIETNAM.

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2. FRENCH EVACUATION FLIGHTS FROM SAIGON.

FRENCH NEGOTIATIONS WITH PRG HAVE GONE BEYOND AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPAL NOTED IN REFTEL BUT, THERE ARE STILL DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING MODALITIES WHICH WILL MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE TO BEGIN FLIGHTS ON AUGUST 1 AS HCPED. GOF NOW EXPECTS THEM TO BEGIN ABOUT AUGUST 7. FRENCH INTEND TO UTILIZE CARAVELLE AIRCRAFT WITH FULL LOAD OF PASSENGERS (PLUS 20 TO 30 KILOS BAGGAGE). FRENCH EMBASSY SAIGON ESTIMATES 75 OF THE 2,000 FRENCH CITIZENS FROM METROPOLITAN FRANCE WISH TO LEAVE. THEY DO NOT YET HAVE A REAL FEEL FOR THE NUMBER OF FRENCH OF INDOCHINESE, CHINESE AND INDIAN ORIGIN (7 TO 8,000) WHO MAY ALSO WISH TO COME TO FRANCE. GOF THINKS THAT ONCE IT IS DEMONSTRATED THERE IS A REGULAR FLIGHT, MANY WHO ARE NOW PANICKY WOULD BE REASSURED AND POSTPONE DEPARTURE. NONETHELESS WITH 4 TO 5 FLIGHTS A WEEK, FRENCH ANTICIPATE THE AIRLIFT WILL RUN FOR MANY WEEKS. ALTHOUGH BAGGAGE WOULD NOT BE TRANSPORTED UNTIL LATER, GOF EXPECTS TO USE FLIGHTS IN BOTH DIRECTION FOR DIPLOMATIC POUCH.

3. FRENCH AID TO SVN.

VILLEMUR SAID THAT OF THE 130 MILLION FRANCS OF AID SET FORTH IN THIS YEAR'S PROTOCOL, THE GVN HAD USED ONLY 10 TO 20 MILLION. IN PRINCIPAL THE REST REMAINS AVAILABLE FOR THE PRG TO DRAW ON. SINCE THIS CREDIT IS NOT AUTOMATICALLY CANCELLED IN 1976, THE PRG COULD CONCEIVABLY DRAW ON THIS CREDIT FOR SOME TIME TO COME. THIS CREDIT WAS DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS:

- (A) SUPPORT FOR COMMERCIAL IMPORTS, AND
(B) INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS.

THE GOF DOES NOT EXPECT ANY PRG EFFORT TO REINSTATE A COMMERCIAL IMPORT PROGRAM COMPARABLE TO THAT OF THE GVN, BUT BOTH ASPECTS MAY IN THE FUTURE BE THE PATTERN FOR A PRG REQUEST FOR AID. THE DRV AID PROGRAM, HOWEVER, COVERS ONLY PROJECT AID. THE PRG WOULD PROBABLY WISH DIFFERENT TERMS, AND, IN ANY CASE, THE GOF EXPECTS THAT WHEN A PRG IS FUNCTIONING, THERE WILL BE NEGOTIATIONS CONCERNING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EXISTING PROTOCOL. THERE HAS OBVIOUSLY BEEN NO AID PROVIDED YET TO THE PRG UNDER THE PROTOCOL. THERE IS NO WESTERN SHIPPING INTO SVN, THE BANKING SYSTEM IS NOT YET FUNCTIONAL.

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TIONING AND APPARENTLY EVEN THE DOCK AND TRANSPORT FACILITIES ARE NOT YET FUNCTIONING NORMALLY. EVEN THE HUMANITARIAN AID HAS HAD TO BE TRANSPORTED WITH SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS AND THE GOF EXPECTS TO HAVE TO RENEGOTIATE EVEN ITS HUMANITARIAN AID PROJECTS SUCH AS THE HOSPITAL IN SAIGON.

4. POSSIBLE SVN "NORMALIZATION" IN SEPTEMBER.

THE GOF HAS RECEIVED NO MORE NEWS ABOUT THE REPORT OF THE 24TH VIETNAM WORKERS PARTY (VWP) PLENUM. IT HAS NOTED PREPARATIONS FOR WHAT WILL PROBABLY BE THE THIRD CONGRESS OF THE VWP. IN ADDITION THE REPORTS OF THE SHIFT FROM MILITARY GOVERNMENT TO A CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT IN SAIGON APPEAR RELIABLE, AND THIS CHANGE MAY TAKE PLACE BY MID TO LATE AUGUST. THE GOF BELIEVES THESE

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SIGNS POINT TO "THE END OF THE TRANSITION PERIOD" DURING THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER, PERHAPS TIMED TO COINCIDE WITH THE ANNIVERSARY OF HO CHI MINH'S DEATH.

5. ECONOMIC SITUATION IN SVN.

VILLEMUR SAID THE EMBASSY IN SAIGON'S REPORTING HAD CCNTINUED TO CONFIRM THE ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES THAT NGUYEN VAN HIEU HAD NOTED IN THE ARTICLE PUBLISHED IN L'HUMANITE SOME TIME AGO: UNEMPLOYMENT, LACK OF RELIABLE

CADRE (DEPARTURE OF SOME KEY PERSONS FOR ABROAD), ECONOMIC DISLOCATION. COMMUNIST CADRE IN SAIGON HAD CONTINUED TO REFER TO THEIR INTENTION OF "BREAKING THE MACHINE". THEY EXPLAINED THAT THE ARTIFICIAL, FOREIGN AID-DEPENDENT ECONOMY OF THE GVN HAD TO BE BROKEN BEFORE THEY COULD ESTABLISH A NEW ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION BASED ON A MORE SELF-SUFFICIENT AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRIES BASED ON OR SERVING AGRICULTURE. THE COMMUNISTS CLEARLY EXPECTED TO HAVE ALL THE "ARTIFICIAL" CONFIDENTIAL

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LIGHT INDUSTRY COLLAPSE BECAUSE OF LACK OF IMPORTED RAW MATERIALS, MANAGERIAL CADRE AND A COMMERCIAL SYSTEM INCLUDING BANKING CREDITS. ALREADY MOST BUSINESSES HAD BEEN HIT BY THIS POLICY, WHICH WAS ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL FACTORS IN PERSUADING MOST OF THE FRENCH NATIONALS (INCLUDING THOSE NOT FROM METROPOLITAN FRANCE) THAT THEY SHOULD LEAVE SVN EVEN THOUGH THEY HAD NO SPECIFIC PROSPECTS OR RELATIVES IN FRANCE. THE PRG WAS NOT UN-AWARE OF THIS EFFECT OF ITS ECONOMIC POLICIES, IN FACT IT PROBABLY PREFERRED THIS INDIRECT MEANS OF PROMOTING THE EMIGRATION OF FRENCH NATIONALS. IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE COMMUNIST ECONOMIC POLICY WOULD ACCELERATE CHANGES IN THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC SYSTEM IN SVN IN THE DIRECTION OF A SYSTEM CLOSER TO THAT OF THE DRV. WHILE VILLEMUR THOUGHT THE DESTRUCTIVE ASPECTS OF THIS POLICY WERE TAKING EFFECT RATHER RAPIDLY, THE GOF SAW AS YET LITTLE INDICATION THAT ENOUGH CADRE FROM NVN WERE ARRIVING TO IMPLEMENT THE POSITIVE CONTROL MEASURES ON WHICH THE DRV SYSTEM WAS BASED.

6. SOVIET ROLE IN INDOCHINA.

THE FRENCH HAVE VERY LITTLE INFORMATION TO SUPPORT THE THESIS OF SOVIET PREDOMINANCE IN VIETNAM. THE DRV CONTINUED TO SPEAK OF ITS INDEPENDENT POLICY, AND SOVIET AID APPEARED TO BE IN HARMONY WITH SUCH DRV PROTESTATIONS. GOF SAW THE SAME INDIRECT INDICATIONS OF PRC RATHER THAN DRV/USSR INFLUENCE IN CAMBODIA AS THE JOURNALISTS. IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE CHINESE WERE CONCERNED ABOUT THE DRV/USSR ROLE IN LAOS. ALTHOUGH THEY DID NOT CRITICIZE THE DRV BY NAME, ONE OF THE CHINESE DIPLOMATS IN VIENTIANE IMPLICITLY CRITICIZED THE DRV WHEN HE SAID THAT IN INDOCHINA EACH PARTY SHOULD STAY HOME, AND SHOULD BE MASTER IN HIS OWN HOME (IL FAUT QUE CHACUN RESTE CHEZ-SOI ET QUE CHACUN SOIT MAITRE CHEZ-SOI).
GAMMON

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